Penguins Down South

Alfriston [1] is located in the valley of the River Cuckmere and part of the South Downs Way [2], one of 15 National Trails in England and Wales. From July 25 to August 1, 2010, about 45 geeks from various countries conquered the tiny village for the 12th Linux Beer Hike (a.k.a. *Linux Bier Wanderung* [3]).

After a long journey by car and ferry, I arrived on the 24th. Having defeated various roundabouts and the narrow countryside roads, I was glad to find several other geeks who had turned up a day early in Alfriston. The bar staff of one of the three village pubs offered a warm welcome and several varieties of local bitters and ales.

Talk and Play

The following day, we opened the hall and set up our hacklab with various computers, a nice collection of microcontrollers to play with, some musical instruments, and the obligatory coffee machine: LBW was set and ready to go.

During the week there were several talks, including a presentation and hacking session on Arduinos [4]. Another attendee gave an introduction on how to do dynamic routing in Linux with Quagga [5]. The demonstration on a laptop with a virtual machine and a walk through the configuration files was followed by a general chat about routing.

A discussion on home brewing is a must at every LBW. Although we made our own bread and beer in the past, this year we concentrated on wine. One of the participants started experimenting with winemaking a while ago and was happy to share her insights and recipes [6]. We tasted some of the results at the traditional LBW potluck, where one of the French attendees discovered that English wine is not that bad after all. Cheese from France and England, chicken satay, and Swedish popcorn shrimp [7] rounded out the menu.

Cache Me While You Can

Alfriston and the surrounding villages and towns offer plenty of interesting things to do and see. Some of us went on long walks, either to a nearby village pub or to find some hidden caches. This was my first Geocaching [8] expedition ever – thanks for introducing me to a new and very addictive hobby!

Hikes to Beachy Head and the Long Man, a ride on a steam train (another LBW tradition), and a visit to a local vineyard were also a lot of fun. Later in the week, we tried our best to drink all the tea and eat all the cake in the village. The first LBW Tearoom Crawl led us through various tearooms and cafés in Alfriston. Despite the occasional shock that the geek crowd caused for some of the owners ("Oh dear! I'm not making breakfast for all of you!"), they did their best to feed us classic English cream tea.

Cheers!

I had a really good time and lots of fun at the LBW 2010. I would like to thank the organizers and the nice people from Alfriston who put up with us for an entire week – looking forward to seeing you again next year! ▪▪▪

White chalk cliffs, a beautiful countryside, pretty villages and plenty of fine pubs gather along the South Downs Way in Sussex, England – an ideal location for the annual Linux Beer Hike.

By Heike Jurzik

INFO

[1] Alfriston village website: *http://www.alfriston-village.co.uk/*

[2] The South Downs Way: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Downs_Way*

[3] The Linux Beer Hike: *http://www.linuxbierwanderung.org/*

[4] Arduino: *http://www.arduino.cc/*

[5] Quagga: *http://www.quagga.net/*

[6] Adventures in Wine Making: *http://quixotic.eu/Projects/BucketChemistry/*

[7] How to make popcorn shrimp: *http://tinyurl.com/shrimp-popcorn*

[8] Geocaching: *http://geocaching.com/*

LINUX BIER WANDERUNG

LBW is a week-long event that takes place in a different European country each summer, drawing together open source and free software enthusiasts and friends from more than a dozen different countries. It is an entirely volunteer-run event, funded from a combination of donations among the attendees toward the cost of the hall, Internet access, and so on.